

# DR. P. B. BARRINGER ATTACKS GOVERNOR IN SIGNED LETTER

(Continued From First Page.)

was never allowed the opportunity. The continued presentation of trumped-up charges, sometimes given in advance to the press, and scattered broadcast throughout the State, kept me ever on the defensive. I could not, of course, resign under such conditions.

**Made Sacrifice.** When the matter came in this form, however, it did not take me long to decide that I would make the sacrifice—for the sake of the college and of the State, and also for my own peace of mind. With these two men again on the board for four years, backed by a more than complacent executive, nothing could be done in the way of improving conditions at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Disloyalty amongst the faculty and employees would continue; insubordination amongst the students; and every personal enemy would continue to find an official mouthpiece.

That the Governor of a great Commonwealth, a State like Virginia, should have lowered himself to make use of, as tools for a political conspiracy, men whose records he knew, at least well enough to appreciate their value, was a shock, but it was presented straight and true. The height of their venality was simply the measure of their value to him, as a long lever is better than a short.

Any chief magistrate, any sworn officer of the law, who would do this thing would do anything. The elastic limits of an oath of office are nil—once over the line honor is gone forever. He would balk at nothing. I knew his record, his political double-dealing in the days of Mahan, his recent campaign, the representative of the liquor interests in the East, and the idol of the "drys" in the West. And I further knew him to be under influences not of the most reputable character. To remain in office with such an enemy in the Capitol was unwise.

**Some Enemies.** Naturally, I have made some enemies. I have been in Virginia for nearly twenty-five years. I have been executive officer of two of its chief institutions of learning; president of the Medical Society of Virginia; a member of the State Board of Health; a member of the State Board of Agriculture; president of the Eastern Virginia Trucking Board; a member of the Geological Survey Commission; of the Cattle Quarantine Board; the Crop Commission; etc., etc. In the discharge of duty in such varied positions, I have, of course, given offense, but such things are inevitable. All that a man can do is to keep the type of his enemies uniform.

I would call attention to the fact that during this long time no word of criticism was applied to my work in any office, except at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, a place which has been made the foothold of State politics ever since its inception.

When, therefore, I received this message from the Governor and had duly pondered it, I sent him word by my messenger that I considered the two propositions were not reapplicable. I presented my resignation at the first meeting of the board after the new appointments (a majority) had been made.

As regards my determination to answer no questions and make no statement of any kind regarding the matter at the time, it will readily be seen that it was proper. While it was frankly stated that my resignation would be accepted by the board, which was yet to be appointed, I could guarantee nothing until the act was done. Even when the papers, which had inside information, began to bombard me with insinuations and speculations, I asked for interviews, waited quietly for the completion of the act. After that I was free.

**New Appointments.** About June 1, 1912, the Richmond Times-Dispatch published a long article regarding the new appointments on the Virginia Polytechnic Institute board.

"For the term of four years, beginning July 1, 1912, the following were named: Dr. E. Johnson, President of the Norfolk and Western Railway, of Roanoke (reappointed); Senator John B. Watkins, of Chesterfield; H. M. Smith, Jr., of Richmond; and J. Thompson Brown, of Bedford. Senator Watkins, Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown have all seen service on the board of this institution. Mr. Smith's old term expired only two years ago.

"For the unexpired term of two years from July 1, 1912, the following were named: Dr. E. Johnson, President of the Norfolk and Western Railway, of Roanoke (reappointed); Senator John B. Watkins, of Chesterfield; H. M. Smith, Jr., of Richmond; and J. Thompson Brown, of Bedford. Senator Watkins, Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown have all seen service on the board of this institution. Mr. Smith's old term expired only two years ago.

"The three men falling of reappointment are: J. Cullen Carrington, of Charlottesville; Leslie D. Kline, of Henrico; and Robert J. Noel, of East Radford, Va.

"It is noticeable that two visitors who have frequently opposed the regime of the president, Dr. Paul B. Barringer, are left off the board. These are Messrs. N. E. Johnson, President of the Norfolk and Western Railway, of Roanoke, and J. Thompson Brown, of Bedford. Mr. Johnson leaves the board because of the fact that Berkeley D. Adams, who is from the same county of Charlotte, has recently become a member ex-officio by reason of his election as President of the State Board of Agriculture, and two members from one county would cause much criticism.

The elimination of Mr. Noel and Mr. Kline puts an end, it is thought, to recent friction and insures Dr. Barringer's continued service as president of a school which is now in a highly

## Attacks Governor of Virginia



DR. P. B. BARRINGER.

successful condition. The entire board is now friendly to him."

**Fernyhough's Reply.**

When I read these names I was more than puzzled; I was astounded. I could not believe that this was the "packed board" which had been promised. I wired and wrote Dr. Fernyhough, asking in his peculiar phraseology, "Can this be the right bunch?" While his reply is marked "personal," I know he will pardon me if I make the following extracts from his letter of June 6, 1912: "Yes, sir, exactly the right bunch! Things will unquestionably be carried out (by the new board) just as I indicated to you when I last saw you in your office. I will stand for this, and you can count on same." (The bold face is his.)

Again, on July 18, 1912, after the death of Mr. Daniel Harmon, he writes:

"For my part, you are welcome to use my name, should you prefer doing so, as being the individual who went from the Governor to your friend, the late Daniel Harmon, and yourself, in this matter. I considered what I did as a friendly duty, if I may term it so, and I am never afraid to have my name directly connected with my deeds."

**Concerning Johnson.** As regards the "mystery" of President E. Johnson's refusing a reappointment from Governor Mann, I recall say as follows:

Some time in May, 1912, I received an anonymous letter, which read:

"Do you know that the Governor will name your board this year to put Eggleston in your place? Eggleston is off now visiting agricultural colleges studying their methods. The scheme is to connect T. O. Sandy's work with the college."

I do not know who wrote this note, but I had received various letters before in the same handwriting, and the predictions made in them had all been absolutely confirmed, so I knew that I had trustworthy information. One day, merely incidentally, I showed Mr. Johnson this anonymous letter and told him of my experience with the writer. When he was reappointed he at once posted off to Richmond to see the Governor, and while I do not know what happened, those of us who know the "old man" can very well imagine. He simply announced on his return that under the circumstances he would refuse the reappointment.

This anonymous writer was simply one among many. From all parts of the State I had received warnings that with the expected increase in Federal appropriations for the college (Smith-Lever bill), some new means for my removal to make way for "Eggleston and Sandy" would be devised. This rumor was so general, even in the fall of 1911, before any trouble in the United Agricultural Board, that one of the State papers openly charged that I was being persecuted by the powers in control, simply to "make way for personal or political favorites."

So open and general was this talk that I thought Mr. Eggleston ought to know it, and I wrote him the following letter:

**Letter to Eggleston.**

"November 5, 1911.

"Hon. J. D. Eggleston, Jr., Richmond, Va.:—Dear Mr. Eggleston—I have just received notice, through your secretary, that you could not be present on the 14th instant. I am very sorry that you will not be present, as no calamity could befall the Virginia Polytechnic Institute equal to a short board on this occasion.

"Candor also compels me to go further. In a recent paper of this State it was charged that these accusations against me were brought to make way

for political or personal favorites." Now, I am sure you are aware of the underground talk of some of your political friends has allowed many people in this State to get the idea that this reference was to you. Why this unfair inference was drawn I cannot say, but if necessary, I can give you certain remarks of your friends which were, at least, injudicious, and which might have furnished the basis of this widespread belief.

"I felt that you ought to know these facts, and write straight and direct.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) "P. B. BARRINGER."

Mr. Eggleston never did himself the honor of answering this letter, although I know he received it.

It may be looked upon as singular that any one should resign an honorably held position rather than continue official relations with two members of a governing body, but when the case is stated fully I don't think it will appear so.

**Bitter as Gall.**

Both of these members of the board were disappointed aspirants for office at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and were as bitter as gall. One of them, Leslie D. Kline, of Frederick County, Va., before his appointment to the board of visitors by Governor Swanson, was an applicant for an impending vacancy in the animal husbandry department of the V. P. I. He was eternally prattling of high motives and purposes, yet he misled me absolutely in his statements of preparation for the above position as instructor at the V. P. I. Again, he became so intoxicated after one of the board meetings as to be unable to present the next morning, and aid us in making a quorum when important business was on hand.

And now as regards the other member of the old board, the Governor Mann proposed to reappoint if I did not resign, Mr. R. J. Noel, of East Radford, Va.

When first appointed, four or more years ago, Mr. Noel began at once a movement to obtain the trusteeship of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute for himself. By persistent suggestion, insinuation, and criticism he tried to make me and others dissatisfied with the work of Mr. Charles I. Wade, who had filled this position most capably for many years. I could not see my way clear, however, to suggest any change, because I was fully satisfied with Mr. Wade, and I had heard various things about Mr. Noel which I felt rendered him an unfit person for such an office.

For the fact that Mr. Noel was unfit for this office, I refer you to the court records of Montgomery County, the Post-Office Department of the United States government, and Mr. Noel's home town paper. From the latter I quote the following paragraphs.

**Quotes Paper.**

The issue of the Radford Record, January 17, 1913, speaks of him as follows:

"From the tone of the council meeting Monday night, it would appear that the position held by Captain B. and Mr. R. J. Noel, the two dictators in Radford politics, is becoming untenable. They both want to resign from council. It is a decided closure to have the gentlemen admit openly and in public that their policies, carried out in municipal affairs, is inimical to the present growth and future prosperity of Radford. Their statements are verified by facts. Their policies have been a stench in the nostrils of all that is decent and honorable in city government. As men who know how to gain their ends by the prostitution of their responsible offices, they stand in a class by themselves."

In this connection I will state that

this Captain B. is the same Captain B. to whom Mr. Noel, when chairman of the Finance Committee of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute board, loaned \$5,000 from the college sinking fund, taking a flouting mill as a security. This loan still stands, a serious risk to the college. Prior to this time this money had been invested by our treasurer in Virginia "ventures" and other securities of trust fund type.

In the issue of the Radford Record, July 18, 1913, R. J. Noel is further charged with having negotiated, while a member of the Council and Committee of Finance, a loan of \$25,000 for himself from the city treasury and giving inadequate security.

This is the man who wanted to be the treasurer of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and this the sweet-scented pair which Governor Mann proposed to turn on me for four years after the strenuous six years of service at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

At the meeting of the new board July 10, 1912, I presented my resignation, which read as follows:

**His Resignation.**

July 2, 1912.

"To the Honorable Board of Visitors, Blacksburg, Va.:

"Gentlemen—I am one of those who believe that suddenness and its resultant harmony between any governing board and its executive officer is absolutely imperative. To this end, during the seven or eight years during which I was chief executive officer of the University of Virginia, I gave the board their regular opportunities to determine if such a condition existed by presenting every two years my resignation. It was my intention to do this at the end of my second year at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, but I was not given the opportunity. I could not think of resigning when at practically every meeting some trumped-up charge reflecting upon me was presented, and as an executive officer was presented.

In spite of the fact that the opportunities for making good at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute have so far been meagre, I now present my resignation, to take effect this date.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) "P. B. BARRINGER, President."

The record entered on the minutes of the board regarding this episode reads:

"The resignation of Dr. P. B. Barringer as president of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, having been presented to and considered by this board, on motion made is hereby accepted. In accepting this resignation the board desires to place on record

"That as the selection of a successor to Dr. Barringer is a matter deserving mature consideration by the board, by unanimous vote, it is requested that the board intend to meet on the 10th of July, 1912."

The members present at this board meeting were: Mr. Eggleston, present for the first time; Mr. Noel, present; and the new appointees constituting the majority. Only one member of the old board was present, Mr. B. F. Kirkpatrick, of Lynchburg.

**Debt to Remain.** When informed of the action of the board, I asked for a week's time to consider the question of serving out another year. Of course, I knew that the board intended to elect Mr. Eggleston, and that this time was simply extended because he could not accept until he had resigned his position as Superintendent of Public Instruction and membership on the board, and allowed at least a decent time to elapse before taking office, but I wished to finish up three or four things at the V. P. I. that were necessary.

I wished to finish payment on the \$25,000 debt on the institution that I found when I went there, and leave it free of debt. I had been gradually raising the entrance requirements in the various departments before giving up control. I finally agreed to hold on for another year, and these things were done.

And now as regards the public claim that he threatened a public office if he threatened the appointment of two impugned members on his board, and then "fixed" a new board against him for a high moral purpose.

Without any conference with either the rector of the board or the president of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Governor Mann had rushed through the Legislature a bill creating a new board of Agriculture. In this bill the name of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute was used as a drawing card, and under the wording of the act that to finish payment on the \$25,000 debt or more of annual appropriation. So hurried was its progress that I could learn little of the bill until it was passed. At an early meeting of the United Board of Agriculture, and demonstration third, in the natural order of sequence.

After T. O. Sandy. I challenge any man to bring forward a single word or act of mine inimical to this work. I have never felt that the head of this bureau, Mr. T. O. Sandy, was the proper man for the place, but that did not change my view of the good service of the bureau. Scores and scores of demonstrators

technic Institute, Mr. St. Clair, who sat with me on the United Board of Agriculture, I demanded and secured our share, and it was used in a series of movable schools of agriculture throughout the State. This was the sum and substance of my so-called opposition to the demonstration work. I did deny that it should be advanced to the exclusion of every other agricultural agency in the State, as Governor Mann desired, believing demonstration simply a part of a general program in which the Experiment Station work comes first, the college second, and demonstration third, in the natural order of sequence.

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